



State Senator

**Neal J. Kedzie**

11th Senate District

**Testimony on Assembly Bill 347**

**Senator Neal Kedzie**

**Assembly Committee on Urban and Local Affairs**

**September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

Representative Berceau, members of the Committee, thank you for holding a hearing today on Assembly Bill 347.

Under current law, one of the responsibilities of a County Sheriff is to collect and dispose of unclaimed property in their county. Typically, they collect the property one of three ways:

- recovery of stolen or found merchandise;
- property left by a prisoner at a County Jail when they are either discharged or transferred; or,
- property owned by a deceased resident of a county nursing home or similar institution.

Any property collected by the Sheriff in this manner may be claimed by a person with the legal authority to do so. If Property remains unclaimed for more than one year, it is the responsibility of the Sheriff to either sell the property at a public auction or to destroy it.

Assembly Bill 347 permits a County Sheriff to sell unclaimed property through either a traditional public auction, or an Internet auction site. The bill does not change any existing requirements, such as the property must be held at least one year or that a notice must be posted at three public places describing the auction. It simply allows for the option of an Internet auction.

We introduced this Legislation at the request of one of the Counties we represent and believe that it has the potential to benefit every county in Wisconsin. We are told that the existing system can be burdensome, and as the auctions are typically limited in participation, they typically provide a minimal financial return. By allowing Counties to utilize internet sites such as E-Bay, the auction would be available to more people, potentially generating more interest and higher bids, resulting in more revenue to offset the County's costs of collecting, storing, and selling unclaimed property.

Finally, please know that the bill simply gives Counties this option, but does not require it. Counties that wish to continue operating as they have in the past can continue to do so.

Thank you for your consideration of Assembly Bill 347, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.